



NOAA
FISHERIES

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management

Final Amendment 6 to the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan

September 2015

Outline

- Need for Action and Management Objectives
- Timeframe of Action
- Summary of Final Measures

Need for Action & Management Objectives

- Purpose and Need - Consider short-term, flexible management measures to better address the current issues facing the fishery.
- Objectives of Amendment 6:
 - Increasing the efficiency in the large coastal shark (LCS) and small coastal shark (SCS) fisheries;
 - Maintaining or increasing equity across all shark fishermen and regions;
 - Promoting economic viability for the shark fishery participants;
 - Obtaining optimum yield from the LCS and SCS fisheries;
 - Maintaining or increasing management flexibility for the shark fisheries;
 - Decreasing dead discards of sharks;
 - Continuing to rebuild overfished shark stocks; and
 - Preventing overfishing of shark stocks.

Timeframe of Action

- **ANPR:** September 2010– March 2012
- **NOI and White Paper:** February 2011
- **Control Date:** September 16, 2011
- **Predraft:** March 2014
- **Stock Assessment Determination:** September 5, 2014

Species	SEDAR 34 (2013)
Bonnethead Shark	<u>Atlantic</u> : Unknown
	<u>Gulf of Mexico</u> : Unknown
Atlantic Sharpnose Shark	<u>Atlantic</u> : Not overfished and no overfishing occurring
	<u>Gulf of Mexico</u> : Not overfished and no overfishing occurring

- **Draft EA and Proposed Rule:** January 2015
- **Final EA and Rule:** August 18, 2015

Summary of Final Measures

Alternative A – Permit Stacking

Alternative B – Commercial Shark Retention Limits

Alternative C – Atlantic Regional and Sub-regional Quotas

Alternative D – GOM Regional and Sub-Regional Quotas

Alternative E – Modifying Commercial Vessel Upgrading Restrictions

Alternative A - Permit Stacking

Draft EA and Final EA:

Alternative A1: No Action – Do not implement permit stacking – Preferred Alternative

Reason for Change

- No change due to the overall support for the preferred alternative

Alternative B – Commercial Shark Retention Limits

Draft EA:

Alternative B2: Increase the LCS retention limit for directed permit holders to a maximum of 55 LCS other than sandbar sharks per trip and adjust the sandbar shark research fishery quota to 75.7 mt dw (166,826 lb dw) – *Preferred Alternative*

Final EA:

Alternative B2: Increase the LCS retention limit for directed permit holders to a maximum of 55 LCS other than sandbar sharks per trip and adjust the sandbar shark research fishery quota to 90.7 mt dw (199,943 lb dw); set the default LCS retention limit for directed permit holders to 45 LCS other than sandbar sharks per trip – *Preferred Alternative*

Reason for Change

- There was support for an increased retention limit, but concern that the 55 limit would increase participation and was too high since quotas weren't increasing
- Based on comments on the ratio of LCS to sandbar shark used to calculate the commercial retention limits and adjust sandbar shark research fishery quota, NMFS re-evaluated the sandbar shark research fishery quota.

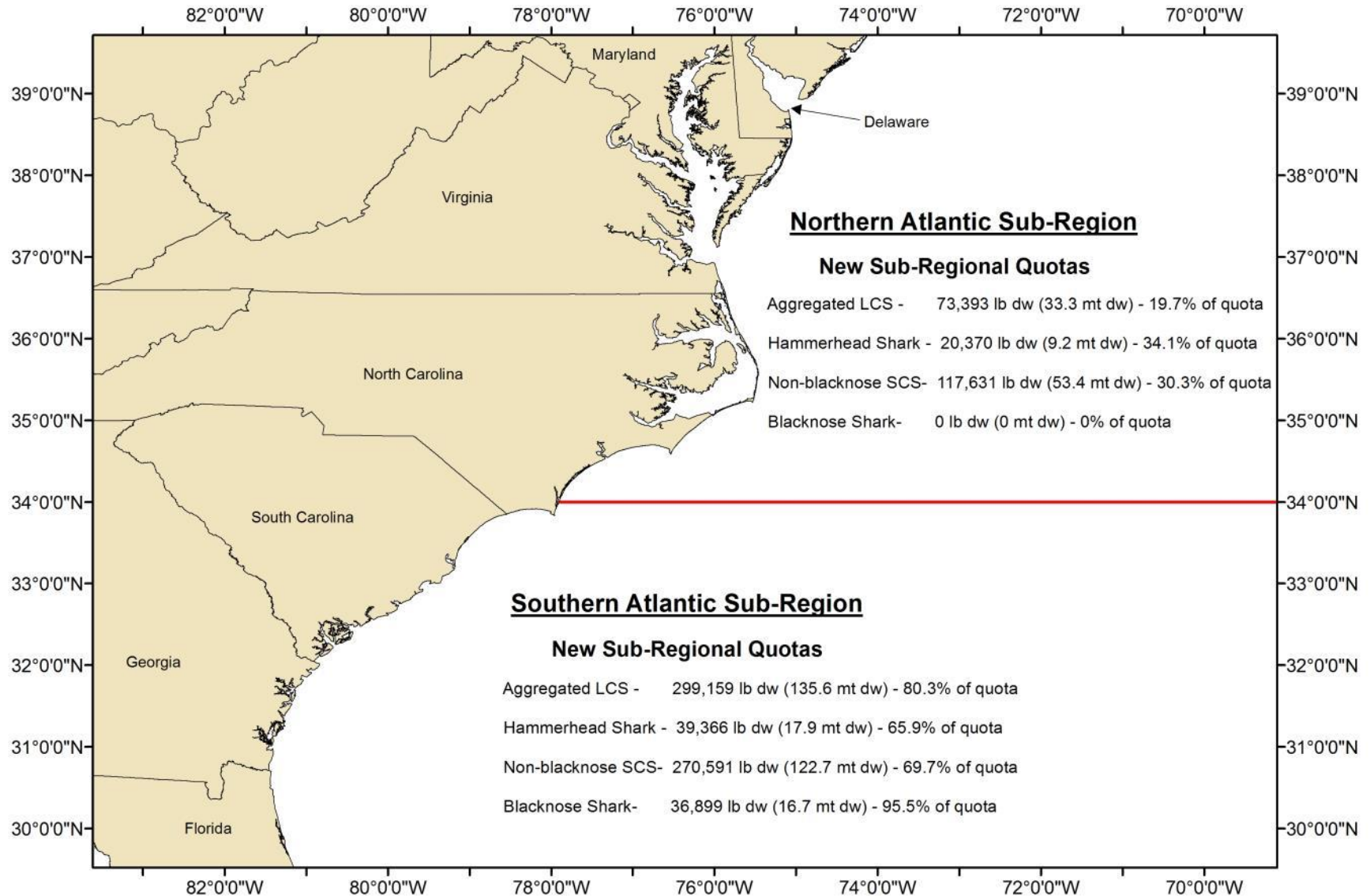
Alternative C - Atlantic Regional and Sub-regional Quotas

Draft EA:

Alternative C4: Apportion the Atlantic regional commercial quotas for certain LCS and SCS management groups along 34° 00' N. latitude (lat.) (approximately at Wilmington, North Carolina) into northern and southern sub-regional quotas and maintain SCS quota linkages in the southern sub-region of the Atlantic region; remove the SCS quota linkages in the northern sub-region and prohibit the harvest and landings of blacknose sharks in the North Atlantic region – *Preferred Alternative*

Alternative C6: Establish a non-blacknose SCS TAC of 401.3 mt dw and maintain the 2014 commercial base annual quota of 176.1 mt dw (388,222 lb dw) – *Preferred Alternative*

Proposed Atlantic Regional and Sub-Regional Quotas



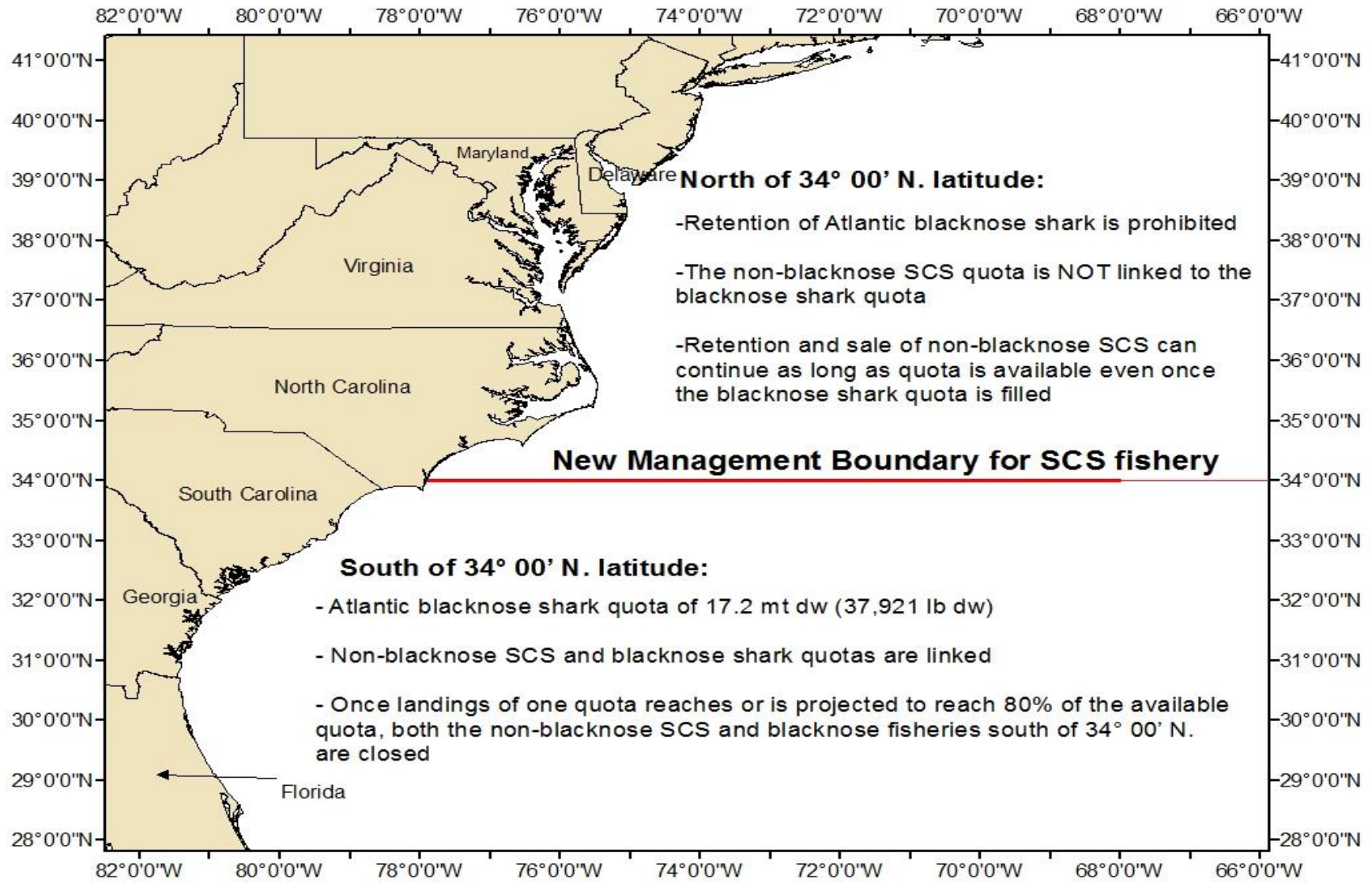
Alternative C - Atlantic Regional and Sub-regional Quotas

Final EA:

Alternative C8: Do not implement sub-regional quotas in the Atlantic region; establish a management boundary in the Atlantic region along 34° 00' N. lat. (approximately at Wilmington, North Carolina) for the SCS fishery; maintain SCS quota linkages south of the 34° 00' N. lat. management boundary; and prohibit the harvest and landings of blacknose sharks north of the 34° 00' N. lat. management boundary—
Preferred Alternative

Alternative C7: Establish a non-blacknose SCS TAC of 489.3 mt dw and increase the commercial quota to 264.1 mt dw (582,333 lb dw) –
Preferred Alternative

Final Atlantic Regional and Sub-Regional Quotas



Alternative C - Atlantic Regional and Sub-regional Quotas

Reason for Change

- The proposed non-blacknose TAC and quota were preferred due to the unknown status of bonnethead sharks. Because stock assessment projections stated that the Atlantic sharpnose stock could withstand harvest above current levels and because most landings of SCS in the Atlantic region are Atlantic sharpnose, NMFS modified the preferred alternative
- Commenters opposed sub-regional quotas for the LCS and SCS fisheries, but supported the removal of the blacknose and non-blacknose SCS quota linkage and the prohibition of blacknose sharks in the northern Atlantic region
- NMFS did not implement sub-regional quotas for the LCS and SCS fisheries. Instead, NMFS is proposing in the shark season rule to adjust the commercial shark retention limit inseason, as necessary, to allow more equitable fishing opportunities across the fishery

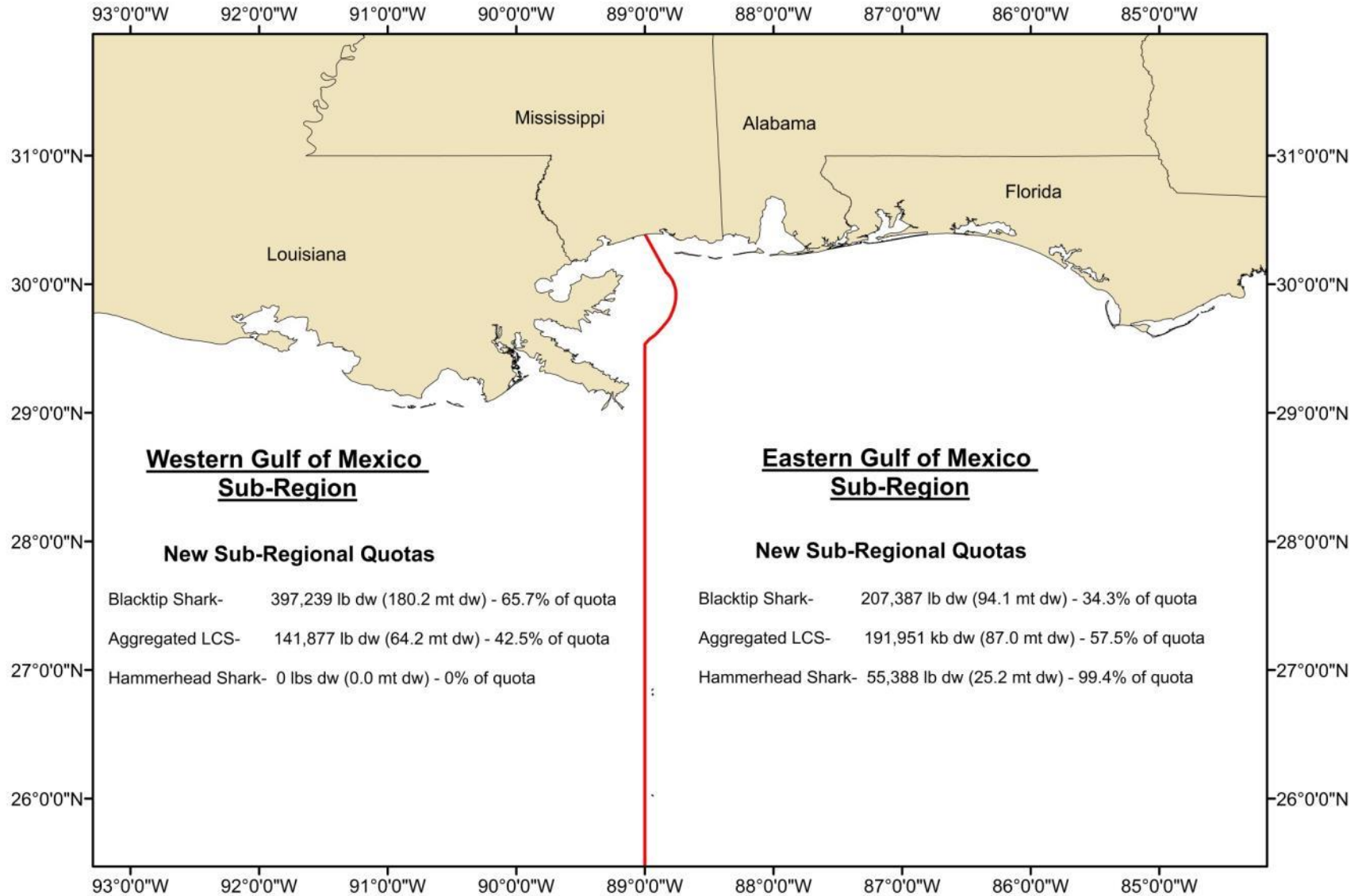
Alternative D – GOM Regional and Sub-regional Quotas

Draft EA:

Alternative D4: Apportion the Gulf of Mexico regional commercial quotas for aggregated LCS, blacktip, and hammerhead sharks along 89° 00' W. longitude (long.) into western and eastern sub-regional quotas and maintain the LCS quota linkages for aggregated LCS and hammerhead sharks in the eastern sub-region of the Gulf of Mexico region; remove the linkage in the western sub-region of the Gulf of Mexico region and prohibit the harvest and landing of hammerhead sharks in that sub-region – *Preferred Alternative*

Alternative D6: Establish a non-blacknose SCS TAC of 954.7 mt dw and increase the commercial quota to the 2014 adjusted annual quota of 68.3 mt dw (150,476 lb dw) – *Preferred Alternative*

Proposed Gulf of Mexico Regional and Sub-Regional Quotas



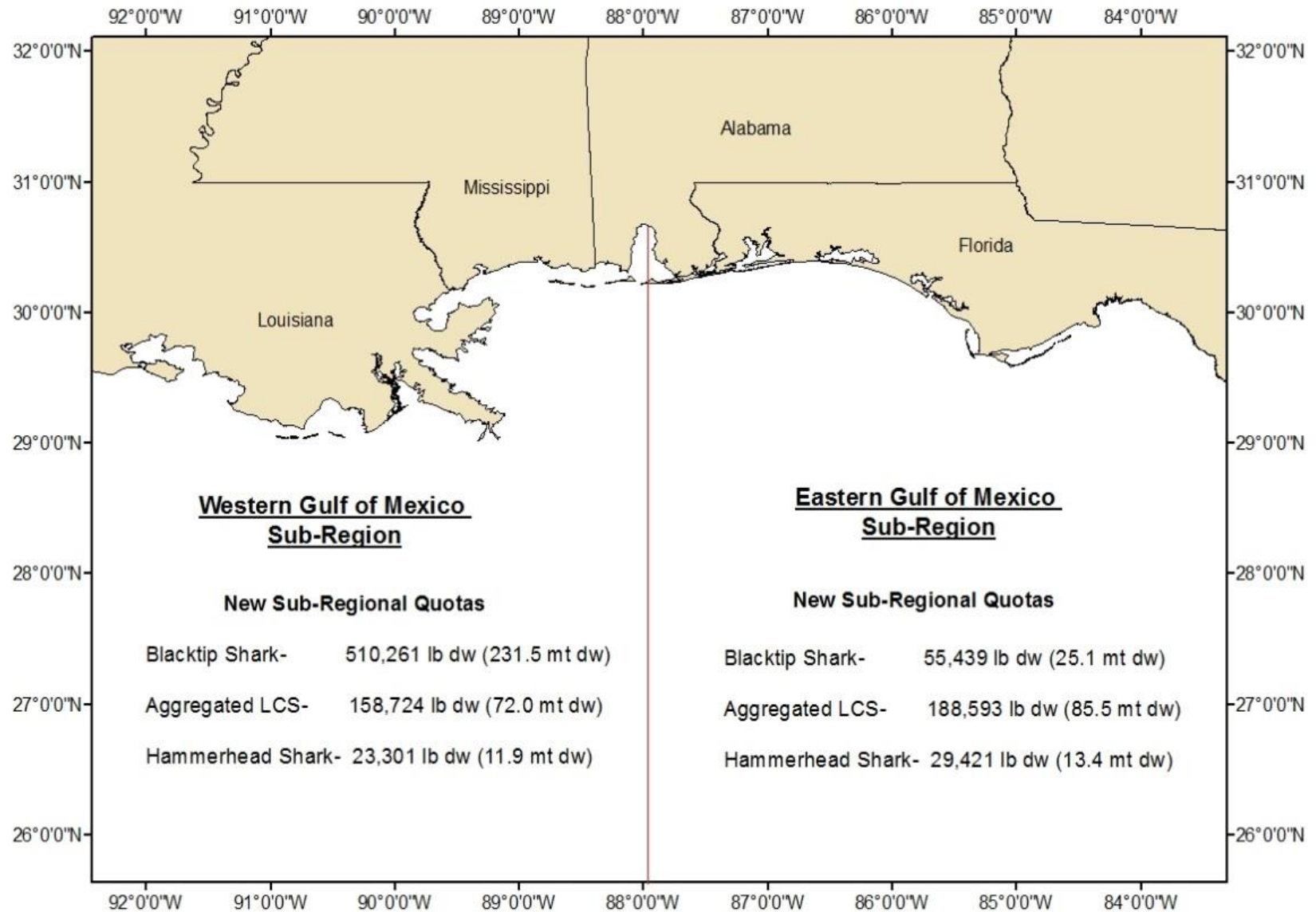
Alternative D – GOM Regional and Sub-regional Quotas

Final EA:

Alternative D3: Apportion the Gulf of Mexico regional commercial quotas for aggregated LCS, blacktip, and hammerhead sharks into western and eastern sub-regional quotas along 88° 00' W. long – Preferred Alternative

Alternative D8: Establish a non-blacknose SCS TAC of 999.0 mt dw, increase the commercial quota to 112.6 mt dw (248,215 lb dw), and prohibit the retention of blacknose sharks in the Gulf of Mexico – Preferred Alternative

Final Gulf of Mexico Regional and Sub-Regional Quotas



Alternative D - GOM Regional and Sub-regional Quotas

Reason for Change

- NMFS received unanimous support for an increase in the non-blacknose SCS TAC and commercial quota, and the stock assessment supported the increase
- NMFS received general support for the sub-regional quotas, but some commenters requested that the boundary between the eastern and western sub-region be placed at 88° 00' W. long. instead of the proposed 89° 00' W. long or at state line.
- NMFS used updated data for the hammerhead shark sub-regional quota percentages to represent current landings patterns.
- Alternative D8 was developed as a new preferred alternative based on additional analysis and public comment and implements a higher non-blacknose SCS TAC and commercial quota, as well as prohibits blacknose shark landings in the Gulf of Mexico to prevent early closure of the non-blacknose SCS fishery.

Alternative E - Commercial Vessel Upgrading Restrictions

Draft EA and Final EA:

Alternative E2: Remove current upgrading restrictions for shark limited access permit holders – Preferred Alternative

Reason for Change

- No change due to the overall support for the preferred alternative

Summary of Amendment 6

Atlantic Region:

- Management boundary along 34° N. latitude for the SCS fishery
- Blacknose sharks prohibited north of the 34° N. latitude
- Non-blacknose SCS commercial quota increased to 264.1 mt dw (582,333 lb dw)
- No sub-regional quotas
- Non-blacknose SCS fishery (north of 34° Lat.) reopened Aug 18

Gulf of Mexico Region:

- Sub-regional split along 88° W. longitude for LCS fisheries, with quota changes
- Blacknose sharks prohibited
- Non-blacknose SCS commercial quota increased to 112.6 mt dw (248,215 lb dw)
- Non-blacknose SCS fishery reopened Aug 18

Overall:

- Retention limit default at 45 LCS/trip and can be increased to a max of 55 LCS/trip
- No upgrading restrictions for shark limited access permit holders



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Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management

**Proposed Rule to Establish the Quotas and
Opening Dates for the 2016 Atlantic Shark
Commercial Fishing Season**

September 2015

Shark 2016 Proposed Specifications

Commercial Fishery

- Published on August 18, 2015
- Open all shark management groups on or about January 1, 2015
- Start the 2016 shark fishing season with a retention limit of 45 LCS other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip for directed permit holders.
- Adjust the retention limit inseason as needed.
- Increase the GOM blacktip shark management group sub-regional quotas based on underharvests in 2014 and 2015.
- Decrease the GOM non-blacknose SCS quota based on an overharvest in 2014.
- Decrease the Atlantic blacknose quota over a 5 year timeframe based on an overharvest in 2012 and further decrease the quota over a 3 year timeframe based on an additional overharvest in 2015.

2016 Proposed Shark Quotas

Region or Sub-region	Management Group	2015 Annual Quota (A)	Preliminary 2015 Landings ¹ (B)	Adjustments (C)	2016 Base Annual Quota (D)	2016 Proposed Annual Quota (D+C)	Proposed Season Opening Dates
Eastern Gulf of Mexico	Blacktip Sharks	25.1 mt dw (55,439 lb dw)	21.4 mt dw (47,351 lb dw) ²	3.8 mt dw (8,396 lb dw) ³	25.1 mt dw (55,439 lb dw)	28.9 mt dw (63,835 lb dw)	January 1, 2016
	Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks	85.5 mt dw (188,593 lb dw)	82.2 mt dw (181,262 lb dw) ²	-	85.5 mt dw (188,593 lb dw)	85.5 mt dw (188,593 lb dw)	
	Hammerhead Sharks	13.4 mt dw (29,421 lb dw)	7.3 mt dw (16,012 lb dw) ²	-	13.4 mt dw (29,421 lb dw)	13.4 mt dw (29,421 lb dw)	
Western Gulf of Mexico	Blacktip Sharks	231.5 mt dw (510,261 lb dw)	197.4 mt dw (435,818 lb dw) ²	35.1 mt dw (77,277 lb dw) ³	231.5 mt dw (510,261 lb dw)	266.6 mt dw (587,538 lb dw)	
	Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks	72.0 mt dw (158,724 lb dw)	69.2 mt dw (152,554 lb dw) ²	-	72.0 mt dw (158,724 lb dw)	72.0 mt dw (158,724 lb dw)	
	Hammerhead Sharks	11.9 mt dw (23,301 lb dw)	6.5 mt dw (11,314 lb dw) ²	-	11.9 mt dw (23,301 lb dw)	11.9 mt dw (23,301 lb dw)	
Gulf of Mexico	Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks	45.5mt dw (100,317 lb dw)	46.2 mt dw (101,948 lb dw)	-5.3 mt dw (-11,612 lb dw) ⁴	112.6 mt dw (248,215 lb dw)	107.3 mt dw (236,603 lb dw)	
	Blacknose Sharks	1.8 mt dw (4,076 lb dw)	1.0 mt dw (2,096 lb dw)	-	0.0 mt dw (0 lb dw)	0.0 mt dw (0 lb dw)	

2016 Proposed Shark Quotas cont'd

Region or Sub-region	Management Group	2015 Annual Quota (A)	Preliminary 2015 Landings ¹ (B)	Adjustments (C)	2016 Base Annual Quota (D)	2016 Proposed Annual Quota (D+C)	Proposed Season Opening Dates
Atlantic	Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks	168.9 mt dw (372,552 lb dw)	12.3 mt dw (27,100 lb dw)	-	168.9 mt dw (372,552 lb dw)	168.9 mt dw (372,552 lb dw)	January 1, 2016
	Hammerhead Sharks	27.1 mt dw (59,736 lb dw)	0.7 mt dw (1,476 lb dw)	-	27.1 mt dw (59,736 lb dw)	27.1 mt dw (59,736 lb dw)	
	Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks	176.1 mt dw (388,222 lb dw)	98.6 mt dw (217,360 lb dw)	-	264.1 mt dw (582,333 lb dw)	264.1 mt dw (582,333 lb dw)	
	Blacknose Sharks (South of 34° N. lat. only)	17.5 mt dw (38,638 lb dw)	20.4 mt dw (44,966 lb dw)	-1.5 mt dw (-3,221 lb dw) ⁵	17.2 mt dw (37,921 lb dw)	15.7 mt dw (34,700 lb dw)	
No regional quotas	Non-Sandbar LCS Research	50.0 mt dw (110,230 lb dw)	14.8 mt dw (32,593 lb dw)	-	50.0 mt dw (110,230 lb dw)	50.0 mt dw (110,230 lb dw)	January 1, 2016
	Sandbar Shark Research	116.6 mt dw (257,056 lb dw)	60.6 mt dw (133,496 lb dw)	-	90.7 mt dw (199,943 lb dw)	90.7 mt dw (199,943 lb dw)	
	Blue Sharks	273.0 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	0.5 mt dw (1,114 lb dw)	-	273.0 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	273.0 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	
	Porbeagle Sharks	0 mt dw (0 lb dw)	0 mt dw (0 lb dw)	-	1.7 mt dw (3,748 lb dw)	1.7 mt dw (3,748 lb dw)	
	Pelagic Sharks Other Than Porbeagle or Blue	488.0 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)	50.7 mt dw (111,701 lb dw)	-	488.0 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)	488.0 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)	

Potential Shark Inseason Action

Adjust the LCS commercial retention limit – an example:

- The Atlantic aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups open in January.
- NMFS could allow approximately 30% of the quota to be landed.
- Once the quota reaches about 30%, NMFS could reduce the retention limit to incidental levels (e.g., 3 LCS other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip) or another level calculated to reduce the harvest of LCS (e.g., 0 LCS other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip).
- At some point later in the year (e.g., July 1 or July 15), NMFS could increase the retention limit to the default level (45 LCS other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip) or another amount up to a maximum of 55 LCS/trip.
- If the quota is being harvested too quickly or too slowly, NMFS could adjust the retention limit appropriately to ensure the fishery remains open most of the rest of the year.

Request Public Comment

NMFS would like specific comments on Atlantic blacknose shark quota:

- Proposing to spread the Atlantic blacknose overharvest amount over a 3-year period (2016 to 2018) to reduce impacts on the blacknose shark and non-blacknose SCS fisheries in the Atlantic region south of 34° N. latitude.
- Due to the 2015 overharvest and additional 2012 overharvest reduction, the Atlantic blacknose shark quota would be reduced by 1.5 mt dw (3,221 lb dw) in 2016 and the adjusted quota would be 15.7 mt dw (34,700 lb dw).
- If NMFS accounted for the full 2015 overharvest amount in the 2016 quota in addition to the 2012 overharvest reduction, the blacknose shark quota would be reduced by 3.4 mt dw (7,439 lb dw) and the adjusted quota would be 13.8 mt dw (30,482 lb dw).

Request for Public Comments

Comment period closes on:

September 17, 2015

Please submit comments to:

<http://www.regulations.gov>

Keyword - "NOAA-NMFS-2015-0068"

Comments can also be submitted via fax: 301-713-1917, Attn: Guy` DuBeck / Karyl Brewster-Geisz

Or Mail: NMFS SF1, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Please identify comments with NOAA-NMFS-2015-0068

For more information go to: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>

Additional Questions?

guy.dubeck@noaa.gov / karyl.brewster-geisz@noaa.gov or 301-427-8503